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ABSTRACT

This resource handbook was designed to assist constituent school district personnel with the critical issues of student absenteeism and dropouts. From July 1982 through February 1983 and in May 1986, members of the Oakland County (Michigan) Attendance/Dropout Task Force met with educational and community agency personnel, graduating high school students, and student dropouts for the purpose of exchanging views regarding student absenteeism and dropouts. Contained within chapter 1 of this document are comments taken from the minutes of each meeting with community agency members and school personnel; no attempt was made to substantiate or to change any of the comments. Chapter 2 focuses on the information obtained from the student dropouts and the graduating seniors. In addition to reporting some of the comments these individuals made during the unstructured, open-ended interviews, this chapter provides a committee report, a questionnaire guide for dropouts, and a guide for current senior interview questions. (KM)

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Each constituent district superintendent receives one copy free of charge. Additional copies to constituent district personnel may be purchased for two dollars ($2.00) less than stated cost above.

The cost per issue includes postage and handling charges. They are available from the Editor: Terry Thomas, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Oakland Schools, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Pontiac, Michigan 48054. Area code: (313) 858-2098

*No longer available
**To be available in April, 1987

FOREWORD

Each year the Oakland Schools Department of Pupil Personnel Services publishes one or more issues of a resource handbook for constituent district personnel entitled: **READ.**

Each issue of READ is devoted to one or more topics that are suggested to us by constituent district administrators. In this issue as in past issues we have included information such as new or amended state or federal legislation, recent court decisions, excerpts from the Michigan Compiled Laws, Attorney General's Opinions, and research affecting the topic discussed. We attempt to examine the problem described and suggest different strategies and ideas obtained from school districts locally, statewide or nationally which appear to be successful.

This issue of Read is being published for the purpose of assisting school personnel with the critical issue of student absenteeism/dropouts.

Editor

Terry Thomas, Director
Pupil Personnel Services
Oakland Schools

INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE MEETINGS WITH

EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY AGENCY PERSONNEL

From July 1982 thru February 1983, the editor and members of the Oakland County Attendance/Dropout Task Force met with the following educational and community agency personnel and graduating high school seniors and student dropouts for the purpose of exchanging views regarding the critical issues of student absenteeism and dropouts.

COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Oakland County Division of Health	July 6, 1982
Oakland County Youth Assistance	July 17, 1982
Family Focus- Child Abuse and Neglect	July 26, 1982
Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency	July 27, 1982
Oakland County Juvenile Court	July 30, 1982
Oakland County Department of Social Services	Aug. 3, 1982
Oakland County Children's Village	Aug. 3, 1982
Oakland County Office of Substance Abuse	Aug. 11, 1982
Oakland County Friend of the Court	Aug. 13, 1982

SCHOOL PERSONNEL:

School Counselors, Elementary/Secondary	Nov. 17, 1982
Constituent District Superintendents	Nov. 18, 1982
Social Workers	Nov. 18, 1982
Classroom Teachers, Elementary/Secondary	Nov. 22, 1982
Elementary School Administrators	Nov. 23, 1982
Secondary School Administrators	Dec. 1, 1982
Adult Education Directors	Dec. 3, 1982
Special Education Directors	Dec. 7, 1982
Alternative Education Directors	Dec. 9, 1982
Boards of Education Members	Jan. 17, 1983
Directors of Instruction/Curriculum	Feb. 9, 1983
Student Dropouts	Feb. 16, 1983

It is important to note that no attempt was made on the part of the Task Force to substantiate any comment made, nor did we change any comment. They are as stated.

Comments stated on pages 1-28 were taken from the minutes of each meeting.

STUDENTS

Student Dropouts	May 1986
Graduating Seniors	May 1986

Report of interviews with students begins on page 29.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Chapter I

Forward i
Introduction ii

Interviewing with Community Agency and Educational Personnel

Comments Applicable to School Administration 1
Comments Applicable to School Curriculum 4
Comments Applicable to School Teachers 8
Comments Applicable to School Counselors.....10
Comments Applicable to Area Vocational Schools.....12
Comments Applicable to School Attendance Policies.....13
Comments Applicable to Parents 14
Comments Applicable to Students 18
Comments Applicable to Teenage Parents 20
Comments Applicable to Judicial System 21
Comments Applicable to Health 22
Comments Applicable to Substance Abuse 24
Comments Applicable to Community Agencies 25
Comments Applicable to Adult Education 27
Comments Applicable to Oakland Schools 28

Chapter II

Interviews with Students 29
Objective XVII of the Oakland County
Attendance/Dropout Task Force 30
Objective XVII Committee Report 32
Questionnaire for Dropouts 35
Questionnaire for Current Seniors 38
What Did Dropouts Say 40
What Did Graduating Seniors Say 44

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

1. School administrators do not understand quality control. Elementary school administrators should follow up students - how well did they do in junior high school and senior high? Junior high principals should do the same - when and why did the students fail? Analyze the origin of the problem and develop intervention programs.

2. School administrators should provide inservice for teachers with classroom attendance problems. Attendance should be viewed as a total school problem.

3. There needs to be more dialogue between elementary and secondary school administrators within a school district regarding attendance and school dropouts. It is always viewed as a secondary problem.

4. Schools should identify the geographical location within the community where students reside who have attendance, discipline and academic problems. Neighborhood relationships should be established for increasing communication, home visitations, and developing neighborhood help groups, etc. Plug all school and community resources into these target areas.

5. Tremendous amount of time by administrators spent on attendance and yet few positive results with chronic truants. Administrators need special training in dealing with chronic truants and their problems.

6. Elementary school principals should take a more active role in the causes of school absenteeism and dropouts.

7. Most of the resource personnel are located at the secondary level. They should be at the elementary school level, as well.

8. More regional planning is needed - a great need for cooperation between school districts in a variety of areas. One administrator supervising services for several districts, i.e., food services, transportation, pupil accounting. Let us identify and analyze administrative tasks and subject matter areas that could be regionalized and develop appropriate procedures for following through. Gifted children programs, advanced science and math, vocational areas are just a few examples.

9. Drop outs- let's review their school records. What happened? When did negative attitude begin to appear? When did they begin to fail? What could have been done?

10. Most administrators have a poor background in school law.

11. Some principals do not contact parents regarding absences until the child has accumulated as many as five, ten, and more absences. Parents

should be contacted immediately. Research shows immediate notification reduces absenteeism.

12. Administrators need to become more active in advocacy for employment and training opportunities for students.

13. Approach poor attendance/drop out problems from a simple model as to why kids don't come to school.
    a. Avoidance of conflict.
    b. Continual pathology of failure.
    c. Uninterested and unmotivated.
    d. Peer influence problem.
    e. Develop a program of strategies to work on the problem.

14. Elementary principals need training in identifying potential dropouts in the early grades.

15. Elementary principals should take a more active role in basic skills and should be accountable for all students who cannot read and compute. Early identification and intervention is necessary if we are going to make a significant difference in chronic absenteeism and school dropouts. Elementary school principals need to exert more leadership in early identification and intervention. Most elementary school principals do not understand their responsibilities in preventing school dropouts/absenteeism.

16. Most administrators need assistance in developing a good student record keeping system.

17. Schools should have specific objectives for decreasing absences. EXAMPLE: This year we will decrease our absences by 2 percent by: (define the process).

18. Prevent attendance and dropout problems by developing a team composed of teacher, administrator, social worker, psychologist or diagnosticians, nurse, parent of child, reading specialist. This team would meet with the parent as early as kindergarten when learning problems are first identified. An educational plan should be developed for the child. This could include remedial instruction within the school environment or the plan may call for a physical examination or it may call for referral to an external agency. This would include appropriate follow-up procedures.

19. Early identification necessary if we are to prevent problems, however, there is a need for continuous assistance for kids in later school years. All problems do not originate in the early grades.

20. Many high school attendance problems can be identified at elementary level yet many elementary principals say: "We do not have any attendance problems."

21. Some school attendance policies force administrators to spend a considerable amount of time on daily student absences when the percentage of students with real attendance problems (chronic truancy) is relatively small.

22. Principals at all levels need to visit more classrooms. They should be the instructional leader of the school, yet very few are regarded as agents of change in the instructional area.

23. All building principals should take a course in school building leadership and school management practices.

24. Administrators need to understand parents and students with language problems (bilingual).

25. Elementary school principals should exert more leadership in developing better diagnostic procedures for students with reading problems. Placing all students in a remedial reading program without diagnosing the problem is not in the best interest of the student.

26. Administrators should be held more accountable for students who have reading problems.

27. Some administrators believe an alternative educational program is all that is necessary in a dropout prevention program.

28. School administrators need to be more active politically in resolving the problems associated with poverty.

29. School administrators need to understand occupational opportunities that will be available to students in the future. This is an ongoing process and the school structure and curriculum needs to be flexible to accommodate changes.

30. All school administrators need to be made aware of demographic changes.

31. School administrators need to lead the educational environment in career work experience programs. The curriculum should be meaningful to those who are not going to enroll in a college degree program.

32. Administrators should take the lead in developing adequate school funding for all school districts. We shouldn't have wealthy school districts and poor school districts. This isn't fair to the children.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO SCHOOL CURRICULUM

1. Why do all high school students have to attend school all day?

2. Establish stop smoking clinics for students. Use students to help students in these clinics. Let's turn it around. Perhaps some teachers would also like to use the clinic. Why not have it during the school day? Special award for those who quit smoking.

3. The high school curriculum should include more work/school, co-op, and community service programs.

4. Why a minimum school age? More pre-school programs such as Head Start and the High Scope program should be established for 3 and 4 year old economically disadvantaged students.

5. From kindergarten through grade 12 greater emphasis should be placed upon sense of responsibility, consequences of one's actions, responsibility for others. More respect for authority.

6. Passing a child from one grade level to the next level without basic skills only perpetuates the problem. Schools should identify tasks or objectives to be accomplished by each student during the school year at the student's current academic level.

7. Grade levels are no longer needed. They are primarily used for administrative ease in organizing the school. There has to be a better way. The organizational structure, kindergarten through grade 12, needs to be reorganized. Can we use the computer to help us reorganize?

8. More alternative educational programs are needed. What kinds of alternative educational programs are currently being offered throughout Oakland County schools? Can we share through regional planning?

9. There is a need for parental effectiveness training programs conducted by school districts including pre-kindergarten parents.

10. Parents need to be more involved in school program planning.

11. Do we actually take into account individual differences among students when planning educational programs? Can't we develop an individual educational plan for each child beginning at kindergarten?

12. Retention of students does more harm than good. The grade structure causes retention. Let's change the structure.

13. Implement K-12 career education with emphasis on the importance of self awareness and goal setting/achieving.

14. Why don't we do something about problems encountered in moving from elementary to junior high? From one teacher who is interested in the whole child to many teachers at secondary level who are not aware of child's problems, family problems, etc? Elementary teachers appear to be more supportive.

15. Gifted students dropout due to boredom and family problems. Many also get into trouble with teachers.

16. Poor readers - placed into special groups at early grade level - most of them do not become average readers - perhaps something else is wrong. Maybe physical problems, i.e., hearing, vision, emotional impairments. Are we checking other problems prior to placement into reading groups? Are we requesting a complete physical examination? Do we have a team approach when remedial reading isn't effective?

17. We need more flexible student scheduling at high school level. Why force some students to take five or six subjects? We all know school counselors must place some students in classes for no reason other than to fill their schedule. This is crazy.

18. If students who have poor attendance records are poor readers, how come most secondary schools do not have special reading programs? Some students are not capable of reading the material in textbooks. Do we really understand their problems? How can we provide students with textbooks, materials, even give them tests which they are unable to read? Does this make sense?

19. In the curriculum; there should be:
    a. Human sexuality classes
    b. Parenting skills consisting of:
        (1) Interpersonal relationships
        (2) Problem solving
        (3) Money management
        (4) Self management - responsibility
        (5) Child management
    c. More vocational programs
    d. More co-op work/school - community service programs

20. Business and industry need to assist school personnel in short and long term planning of school curriculum. This should be an ongoing process.

21. Schools should concentrate on mastery of basic skills for all students from K-12.

22. Need to emphasize importance of a well rounded education to students so that they are prepared to take their places as productive citizens in a democratic society.

23. Student activities have been reduced due to lack of finance. Can we harness the resources of the community to sponsor some of these activities such as business/industry and civic and social organizations?

24. Earlier vocational training. Why not begin teaching some vocational skills at the junior high level? More technical training programs are needed.

25. Curriculum should include programs which would assist in developing problem solving skills.

26. Most students who have a high absentee rate and who drop from school lack basic skills.

27. Students are not identified as "high risk students" as early as they should be and many of these children are being placed in special education programs because of discipline or learning problems.

28. More teaching materials designed for students with learning problems are needed. Learning labs at secondary school for reading and math have been helpful. Have the Oakland County schools received the IBM reading

29. Building principals should be more involved in curriculum and instruction.

30. Teachers need to be more involved in curriculum planning. Everything shouldn't be the responsibility of the curriculum director.

31. If you look at the courses offered and the grade levels they were taught in 40 years ago and looked at them today you won't find much difference.

32. We should be stressing more creativity and innovation at the K-12 structure.

33. We have a K-12 program, an alternative education program, an adult education program. Shouldn't we have a flexible educational program incorporating the best of all these programs into a master educational program?

34. Have we really identified the best educational program for each child?

35. Curriculum needs to look toward the future. Establish a closer relationship with business and industry for curriculum changes - an ongoing process.

36. Required courses in high school - (a) Parental training (b) family living courses.

37. Have we really made progress in total school curriculum structure? In reviewing school programs thirty years ago I find the same courses

taught in the same grade levels. I recognize content in some areas has changed and some movement made in vocational training courses, but if you would obtain a high school curriculum of thirty years ago, I believe you would find the same courses taught at the same grade levels K-12.

38. Open up the educational process to skilled and technical people without teacher certification for instructional purposes.

39. The gap between our present curriculum and technology and the need for specific skills upon graduation from high school is widening at a rapid rate.

40. Which will be important for some students in the near future - a high school diploma without any specific skills or a skill without a diploma? Will the high school diploma become obsolete?

41. Are we really getting ready for the electronic age? All teachers need to be retrained. This could be done at the local district level but they will need help.

42. Sex education should begin at kindergarten and should include birth control information in later grades.

43. The use of the computer should be included for all students.

44. Drug education should begin at kindergarten.

45. Teachers should be given more responsibilities for curriculum/ instruction.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO SCHOOL TEACHERS

1. Teachers should be provided inservice programs to assist them in working with behavior problems in the classroom. Many inservice programs are planned by the administrator. We need to update our skills and become aware of new techniques and methods. We need practicality not just philosophies. We want to listen to "doers".

2. Teachers need help in learning how to work with parents. It appears teachers are very comfortable and work well with students. Many lack the skills in working with parents, especially male parents and parents with language problems.

3. Teachers should have a better understanding of child growth and development. Many times a child's behavior may be contrary to rules established by a teacher, but may be normal for that age group.

4. Secondary teachers seldom review the student's cumulative record for problems related to health,vision, hearing, learning, personal/ social growth, etc.

5. Elementary teachers appear to be more concerned and supportive of students with problems than most secondary teachers.

6. Teacher relationship to child is very important. Teacher must be supportive.

7. Teachers need to be made aware of and should be sensitive to problems parents and children may be having.

8. Teacher attitude should be more positive in terms of addressing the attendance problem; it is not just an administrative procedure or concern. The administrator should be person of last resort. Classroom teacher must become involved with students who have attendance problems. These children have problems.

9. Teachers need help from special education personnel in dealing with special education students. In many cases, "we don't know what to do with them. They are just placed in our classroom without any conference or help from special education personnel."

10. Student attendance is teacher responsibility as well as administrative. Elementary teachers become involved with student attendance, however, many secondary teachers believe this is primarily an administrative responsibility.

11. There should be a total review of teacher certification. The certification process is outdated and should be changed. More courses in subject matter in which teacher will be teaching are needed. Do all

teachers really need a degree, i.e. typing teachers, vocational education teachers, physical education teachers, etc.?

12. The help of teachers is needed in resolving the attendance problem. Turning all attendance problems over to an administrator isn't the answer. "They don't have a magic wand." We should work together.

13. With the shortage of teachers just around the corner it seems an ideal time to restructure the entire teaching profession. Why does every teacher need a teaching certificate or even a college degree?

14. Teachers should be give more control of the curriculum. We have too many administrators assigned this task.

15. Teachers should be more involved with the decision making process involving curriculum and instructional services.

16. Teachers should do more in having their students understand their state and local government.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO SCHOOL COUNSELORS

1. Secondary counselors should have continuous group meetings with potential dropouts.

2. More family counseling by school counselors and school social workers.

3. Counselors should be increased at the elementary school level. School absenteeism and dropout prevention should be a vital part of their assignment.

4. Need for more support personnel such as counselors, social workers, attendance officers in elementary schools in those districts where truancy and dropout rates are high.

5. Counselors for the most part do a good job, but they are too involved with administrative functions, such as student scheduling and completing forms. Too much paper work.

6. High school counselors seem to have little time for working with students and families with problems.

7. More elementary counselors in school districts to facilitate the initial contact with parents in a positive, supportive way.

8. Counselors should provide more counseling for students with attendance and academic problems. Not just with those going to college.

9. Counselors should be using computer technology to cut down on their paperwork. Work more with students.

10. Counselors should do more follow-up studies.

11. Schools should employ part time retired educators on a contracted service basis to complete college transcripts, assist with the scheduling process, schedule changes and the non-professional tasks. Let counselors counsel!

12. Counselors need to have a different schedule than other school employees. Some should start at 1:00 pm. or 2:00 p.m. and meet with working parents at night. This could be on a two days per week basis.

13. Counselors are still trying to identify what their role and function should be after all these years. It's questionable what they do other than administrative tasks.

14. Secondary counselors would be more productive if they were moved to the elementary school.

15. Schools should refer more students to agencies that have the skills and time necessary to affect a change.

16. The State Department should have a Director of Guidance or Pupil Personnel Services to help guidance personnel.

17. Counselors should become more involved in career education and should be advocates for curriculum change for those students who will not be enrolling in a college degree program.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

1. Are the vocational career options in the area vocational schools really job market oriented? Reassess the area vocational school curriculum for more current and technical job related careers. Let's look to the future job market.

2. Should develop programs with cooperation of business and industry for retraining unemployed. State and federal government need to become involved. Use personnel from business and industry to teach some courses. Eliminate or modify teaching certification requirements for some courses.

3. Why can't some students attend the area vocational school without attending the home high school?

4. Area vocational centers need to expand their programs to include more adult students during the day. Open up the vocational and secondary school to out-of-school adults who need to complete their education. Our vocational schools should be filled day and night.

5. Some students have good attendance records at center, but poor attendance at home school. They are being suspended from both programs. We should review the requirement of attendance at the home high school in order to attend an area center.

6. Area vocational schools are an excellent source of training for many students.

7. All students not entering college should be developing a marketable skill.

8. Shouldn't we be linking our vocational school programs with our community college programs?

9. Vocational education must be connected with a liberal arts program.

10. The area vocational schools should be broad based and not limit students to a single track occupation.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICIES

1. Need for district wide, K-12, attendance policy/procedures. Many elementary schools lack well-defined written attendance policies.

2. A reassessment of exclusion policies needs to be undertaken. Rules and regulations are needed but to suspend students for being absent is a questionable practice if it doesn't improve the student's attendance. Perhaps there is a better way for some students.

3. There must be clearly defined policies on excused and unexcused absences accompanied by work make-up procedures. These should be introduced to students, parents and staff at the beginning of each year.

4. Is there a need for a standardized uniform code of conduct and attendance policy throughout the county? Many parents do not understand why one district excuses students and another gives the student an unexcused absence for the same reason.

5. In many elementary schools student non-attendance is not a critical issue and therefore many principals handle it on a one to one basis. There is in many elementary schools a lack of policy for student absences. District wide policy and procedures should be established. Many students are faced with a drastic change in policy when they enter the secondary school. Parents and students should understand the district policy; and what is expected of them beginning with kindergarten.

6. Attendance policies should be consistent - kindergarten through grade 12. Parents have difficulty understanding why schools within the same school district have different attendance rules/regulations. (Two schools for example, in the same district, having different policies for excused/ unexcused absences.)

7. Poor attenders who have personal/social problems or who may lack basic skills, are sometimes subjected to severe exclusion policies.

8. Policies should contain referral procedures to counselors, social workers, and to community agencies. Schools should try to determine the causes and be held accountable for working with these students and families.

9. We need more alternatives to suspension.

10. Some school districts need trained attendance officers; someone who understands the causes of chronic truancy and not rely only on the attendance policy to resolve the problem.

11. A strong attendance policy is needed, but it should not be viewed as the only absentee prevention program.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO PARENTS

1. Some children and parent problems which affect attendance in school are not always school related. School personnel should always be aware of this.

2. Fathers should be more involved with schools, not just the mother. We should make every effort to get them involved.

3. Stress value of education with parents, including pre-school parents.

4. Many parents are afraid of school personnel and will not call school officials when they need help. Some parents of children who have problems have a negative image of some school administrators. The administrator seems more interested in punishing the child rather than in helping the parent help the child. More emphasis needs to be placed on personal visits with parents - emphasis should be positive such as "we would like to help;" not always as a negative/ punitive nature. There appears to be a fear on the part of parents regarding school officials which keeps them away from the school. Especially from low socio-economic families and families with language (non-English) problems.

5. Some parents are unaware of resource personnel available in the school district who could help them.

6. There is a lack of trust on the part of some parents toward school personnel. Schools need to develop programs which would increase communication between home and school.

7. Home visitations by school personnel beginning at elementary school is helpful in developing effective communication between school officials and parents.

8. Parents should be notified when students are absent as soon as possible.

9. Why not use TV- radio - newspaper - emphasizing good attendance and problems students who drop out will have.

10. Child abuse and neglect are on the increase. Teachers should be able to identify children. Teachers should be made aware of referral procedures within their district for suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

11. Many parents believe the school doesn't understand the problems they and their children have. This causes them to adopt the feeling that school personnel don't care. They believe school personnel are not interested in listening to causes for the absences but are more interested in talking about suspension, if the absences continue.

12. A strong need for more teacher contacts with parents especially by junior and senior high school teachers.

13. Parent volunteers, who have had children with attendance problems, work well in visiting with parents who have children with attendance problems.

14. Most success with families is achieved when school officials meet with parents at the early grade levels.

15. School districts should sponsor parenting skills program for parents of pre-school children to help them understand the importance of school in the child's total development.

16. Schools should make a serious attempt to develop programs for promoting communication among all segments of their community. Many school districts hold informal neighborhood meetings explaining and discussing attendance concerns. This is most meaningful. Help passes millage proposals also.

17. Some parents are ashamed of their home and do not want home visitations.

18. There is a strong need for more positive communication from school to parent regarding their child. The majority of comments received by parents from school personnel are of a negative nature.

19. West Bloomfield's Roosevelt Elementary School has an extensive program in parental home visitation.

20. Investigation of students who experience major school discipline problems will usually show a breakdown in family relationships.

21. Apathy on the part of some parents toward value of education.

22. Parents of children who drop from school in the majority of cases have a weak educational background.

23. Unemployment has an emotional impact upon family and creates considerable stress, especially in families where employment has never been a problem. What to do? Where to go for help? They are frustrated and depressed.

24. Some families are very mobile; they receive unemployment benefits; go south for winter and return in the spring.

25. Lack of motivation in the home - a major cause of student absenteeism.

26. Some homes have no telephones.

27. Mobility of students within the same district is a major problem. Turnover extremely high in some districts; 30% or more.

28. Teachers, administrators, counselors should be careful in labeling single parent homes as broken homes.

29. Many single parents are initially concerned with themselves, not the children. Many are overwhelmed by their personal problems associated with divorce and separation. They tend to believe children are adapting well, but in most families the children are affected. The child may hide guilt; some may believe they are responsible for the divorce. Children are also hurt due to the stigma caused by telling others their parents are divorced.

30. Parents should become involved in the PTA's and should attend board meetings.

31. Parents should talk with the superintendent if discussions with other school officials fail to resolve any problem they have, especially prior to taking legal action.

32. Divorce or separation can affect a child's attendance in school and their attitude toward school. Teachers need to be supportive.

33. Teachers need to understand the problems the single parent has and the problems faced by children of single parents.

34. Many single parents work at various hours and may not be at home during the night or are not at home when their child leaves for school. These situations may cause the parent difficulty in contacting the school by phone or person. Schools need to understand this.

35. Schools should understand that the changing structure of the family, i.e., increase in single parent families, dual custody, both parents working, may have a serious effect on some student's attendance. Schools are going to soon be faced with a considerable number of children from single parent homes. They could be the majority soon.

36. Dual custody of children: child lives with one parent, becomes dissatisfied and goes to live with the other parent for awhile and then returns, etc. Child is enrolled in two different school districts during the same school year. This can have a serious effect on the child's school performance.

37. Single parent - labeling of such is not fair. Not all single parent children are problems.

38. In many single parent homes no one is at home when children leave for school or when they return from school. Parent unaware of what children are doing or where they are. They believe they are in school. Schools need to understand the changes in the American family structure.

39. Children are suspended. No one at home. Children are by themselves. Many invite other students over.

40. Parents should become knowledgeable about substance abuse. Schools should help them.

41. Most of the people who come to us for assistance from our agency are mostly school dropouts and are on welfare.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO STUDENTS

1. There is a lack of work opportunity for some teenagers. Lack of spending money; therefore, may drop from school. Need to purchase a car.

2. Concept on the part of some students that even with a high school diploma "I won't be able to get a job."

3. Students more interested in survival day to day. Very difficult for students to plan for the future.

4. Planning for college out of the question for some as money is unavailable.

5. There is a feeling on the part of some children when they arrive at school of loneliness. They feel stranded with no one to identify with. School orientation programs should deal with these types of feelings.

6. More students are concerned with the possibilities of nuclear war, live for today, "no need to plan for the future." Written materials by students, essays, short stories are beginning to reflect this attitude.

7. Poor self concept among non-attenders/dropouts.

8. Considerable outside influence and peer pressure on kids today.

9. Most non-attenders have a pathology of failure, are unmotivated, are uninterested in school.

10. Students stay home to take care of family members, i.e., siblings, grandparents.

11. Access to cars create an attendance problem.

12. Lack of clothing causes some students to stay home.

13. Some students become alienated to school because they can't buy the "in" clothes, can't but a year book, can't attend the dances, can't get a class ring, etc.

14. Students from foreign countries. Problem - culture is different - girls for example have considerable difficulty in relating to male teachers, male administrators.

15. Some students have difficulty understanding why they should stay in school.

16. Drugs, alcohol, are major problems.

17. Statement from several students "No one seemed to care about me."

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO TEENAGE PARENTS

1. Many school districts do not offer the program entitled: Alternative Educational Program for Pregnant Adolescents.

2. Obtaining transportation to another school district which does offer the program is a major problem for some of these adolescents.

3. Teenage pregnancy on the increase, at an earlier age, (11-12-13 years of age). Regional education programs for pregnant adolescents should be established. Preventive programs with schools and community agencies should be working together in developing these programs. More use of the media; TV, radio, newspaper for informing pregnant adolescents of educational opportunities available to them.

4. Pregnant adolescents are unaware of adult education programs available to them or alternative educational programs specifically designed for pregnant adolescents or teenage mothers. Perhaps these programs should have more press coverage. Perhaps an information letter sent to all dropouts would be one way to inform and open lines of communication.

5. The involvement of religious personnel in the community (ministers, priests, rabbis) is a resource proven successful for many schools in establishing lines of communication for public understanding of school district's program.

6. Many schools have programs for teen mothers and they transport them and their children to the center. Day care centers are provided at the center. Funding from Department of Social Services is provided.

7. We need sex education programs beginning in early grades and should include information on birth control.

8. Schools should have more programs for parents in elementary schools on the topic of "How to conduct a sex education program within your family."

9. We need more health clinics in our schools.

10. Students should be able to obtain contraceptives. We will never stop the rate of teenage pregnancies until we allow this. Other countries do this and it works.

11. Students need to accept more responsibility for their actions.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO JUDICIAL

1. Each school district should identify one person as the court liaison person for truancy cases.

2. Important for court to know what the school has done to assist the child/parent prior to court action.

3. Legislators and courts should be made aware of problems dual custodies cause. For example; child may reside with both parents during the school year causing child to attend two different schools. This is causing problems for some of these children.

4. Courts need to take a stronger stance with parents on truancy cases.

5. Placing child in a detention center for truancy is an archaic practice. This doesn't get at the problem.

6. There is a strong need for the school and court to develop a strong relationship.

7. Recommend a standing committee of school and court personnel be established at the county level.

8. Many dropouts engage in criminal activities.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO HEALTH

1. In several school districts there doesn't appear to be any district-wide procedures for referring students to public health nurses including follow up procedures from nurse to classroom teacher.

2. Many students with vision/hearing and other health impairments have been identified and appropriate health data has been recorded in student's record. Problem appears to be that data recorded in the cumulative record is never reviewed by the school staff. Many elementary school teachers review the cumulative record, however, junior and senior high teachers seldom review student's cumulative record and therefore may not be aware of health impairments.

EXAMPLE

Many notes in cumulative record regarding possible health problems, but no information regarding follow up procedures. Just the note.

EXAMPLE: Johnny appears to have trouble seeing the blackboard.

Nothing was noted in the record to what the school did about this problem.

3. Obesity can be a significant factor in a child's attendance.

4. Poor nutrition - causing health problems.

5. Allergies among children appear to be on the increase among elementary school children causing considerable absences.

6. Some parents will not notify school personnel nor the public health nurse of health problems their children may have. It appears they are fearful of the school district labeling their child in the school record; i.e., epileptic.

7. In some cases both school officials and the public health nurse find it extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to obtain the cooperation of the parents when health problems of a child is identified.

8. It is becoming increasingly difficult for teachers to excuse students from their class in order to visit with the nurse. Particularly in those districts who have reduced their daily clock hours of instruction.

9. It is becoming more difficult to schedule health inservice programs for members of the teaching staff.

10. The major health problems causing poor attendance are: respiratory infections, ear infections, strep throat, allergies.

11. Diabetes appears to be on the increase.

12. Many children have health impairments which are not identified early as they should be. Should districts should strongly recommend to parents that a complete physical examination be had for their children at kindergarten level and again at the seventh grade.

13. Many students are on medication due to stress, etc. Chemical imbalance is not uncommon.

14. Counselors/principals should recommend a complete physical examination for any problem student. Academic, personal/social, disciplining, etc.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. Parents accept alcohol use by their child as opposed to drug use.

2. Substance abuse common among students. There is an increase today in alcohol use among students. Heavy peer pressure on students today. Decrease in some population after twenty years of age. Peer pressure not as significant as in school age children.

3. There are curriculum programs available from Oakland County Office of Substance Abuse at no cost to school districts.

4. School personnel and substance abuse agencies should establish a team and provide programs on this subject to PTA's, neighborhood groups, students, and community organizations.

5. School districts should develop in-school "intervention" centers to deal with substance abuse problems and teenage suicide.

6. Communities should develop substance abuse programs.

7. We need to declare war on drugs. Schools, parents, police cannot do it alone. A national approach involving federal and state authorities.

8. A strong instructional program beginning at kindergarten should be initiated on substance abuse.

9. Drug abuse is a major problem in our schools.

10. Substance abuse educators should begin at the kindergarten level.

11. Schools should be the advocates for more drug treatment centers.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO COMMUNITY AGENCIES

1. Some parents will not cooperate with referrals to community agencies.

2. Schools really haven't tapped community resources. A county wide network should be organized. Community agencies including schools should establish periodic meetings, identifying problems and develop county wide attack using all the resources available in resolving the problem.

3. Schools should adopt a closer link with community agencies.

4. Community agency personnel a threat to some school support personnel.

5. Outline problems affecting attendance and seek the assistance of various agencies, community resources, specific persons, to assist these students and their parents. Schools cannot do it all.

6. Need to tap community resources with appropriate follow up procedures.

7. Some families have no money or insurance. Community agencies can assist if aware of problem. Vision, hearing, health problems, food, clothing, etc.

8. Counselors and school administrators should become knowledgeable of the many community resources available and the procedure for direct referral.

9. More dialogue with community agencies, community colleges, business/industry is needed.

10. Referrals to community agencies should be made as early as possible, hopefully K- grades 1-2.

11. School referrals to community agencies are made many times in the spring. They should be made early in the school year.

12. Follow up procedures need to be developed between schools and community agencies once referrals are made.

13. Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency provides a service entitled: Individualized Service Plan. When a child enters the Head Start Program the family is directly involved in all of the components of the program.

14. Community agencies believe school personnel overall do a commendable job in a most difficult environment.

15. Schools and community agencies working together on common problems would result in greater assistance to young persons and their families. A coordinating committee needs to be established which would open the field of communication between all agencies. Representatives from all

agencies would be represented on this council. Objectives would need to be established and long term planning be designed. There should be specific objectives with continuous evaluation. A community needs to organize all of its resources in order to meet the needs of its young people.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO ADULT EDUCATION

1. Self concept - self confidence poor among most students in adult education programs. Most did not do well in traditional program. Failed, were called dumb - had no success. No one seemed to care.

2. Some students want to drop from the high school so they can enroll in adult education programs.

3. There should be more adult education programs for developing vocational skills. They should become directly involved with business and industry.

4. Let's tap the colleges and universities for counselors, perhaps as part of a practicum program (vocational, academic, personal social counseling) for adult education students.

5. Schools with the help of business and industry should submit a master plan on a county wide basis for establishing a technical retraining program for the unemployed.

6. Counseling in some adult educational programs is either poor or non-existent.

7. Many, if not most, 15-17 year olds who enroll in adult education high school completion programs drop before completing the program.

8. Adult education programs should not be viewed as a 'dumping ground', but as an important part of the total school program.

9. The state pupil accounting rules need to be changed to allow more flexibility in the curriculum and to allow adult education directors more freedom in meeting the needs of students enrolled in this program.

COMMENTS APPLICABLE TO OAKLAND SCHOOLS

1. Oakland Schools should have ongoing programs regarding "classroom management," how to deal with attendance and discipline problems. They should be conducted at the constituent district.

2. Oakland Schools should conduct programs regarding the "Role of the Classroom Teacher in Helping Nonattenders." Especially for secondary teachers. Many secondary teachers seem more concerned with subject matter than with the whole child. These should be conducted at the constituent district.

3. Teachers need assistance in communicating with parents and with classroom management skills. Who and what's available at Oakland Schools and in the constituent districts to assist in developing inservice programs of this type?

4. Oakland Schools should provide training for counselors in "community out-reach" and effective techniques for working with indigent parents.

5. Oakland Schools should have programs for school personnel in understanding problems of single parents.

6. Workshops concerned with student attendance problems should be conducted by Oakland Schools for school administrators.

7. Let's develop a booklet for early leavers. How about developing a model at the county level?

8. Oakland Schools should study the need for regional Alternative Educational Schools.

9. Oakland Schools should conduct training in guidance and counseling for adult educational personnel involved in counseling adult education students who are returning to school to obtain a high school diploma.

10. Oakland Schools should initiate the planning for an individualized educational program for all students.

11. Oakland Schools should provide the leadership in developing a completely new structure for providing instructional services to students.

12. Oakland Schools needs to develop a library of resource material on dropout and absenteeism.

13. Oakland Schools should have a training program for school administrators who have attendance responsibilities.

14. Oakland Schools should have a leadership training program for all school administrators.

CHAPTER TWO
INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENT DROPOUTS AND GRADUATING SENIORS

CHAIRPERSON:

Barbara S. Banker
Community Services Coordinator
Clarkston Community Education
5275 Maybee Road
Clarkston, MI 48016
674-4791

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dan Harper
OLHSA
196 Oakland Avenue
Pontiac, MI 48058
858-5142

George McGrath, Family Counselor
Oakland County Friend of the Court
1200 N. Telegraph
Pontiac, MI 48053
858-5561

Bob Weinburger, Counselor
Novi Senior High School
24062 Taft Road
Novi, MI 48050
344-8300

Margaret R. Anderson
1978 Pondview
Rochester Hills, MI 48063
652-6272
Graduate Student (Western Michigan Univ.)

Marilyn Vance, Teacher
Smith Middle School
Troy School District
5835 Donaldson
Troy, Michigan 48098
879-0500

Mary Smith, Counselor
Ferndale High School
881 Pinecrest
Ferndale, MI 48220
545-8600

COMMITTEE REPORT

Procedures and Strategies

The committee determined the following tasks were necessary in order to accomplish our primary objective:

1. Defining the term "dropout" for purposes of this project.
2. Identifying specific populations to be interviewed.
3. Agreeing upon the format to be used for conducting the interviews.
4. Designing a questionnaire that could be utilized to interview both dropouts and in school youths.
5. Identifying persons to be interviewed and arranging specific times.
6. Arranging for and conducting interviews with dropouts and seniors.
7. Tabulating and categorizing the results.
8. Preparing a booklet summarizing the information relayed by dropouts and seniors.

For this study, a "dropout" was defined as anyone who had left the regular high school program within the past five years. Persons who were enrolled in adult education, alternative education, teen pregnancy programs, etc. that operated for less than the full 900 required hours were included in that definition. Seniors were selected because that group had the longest experience in the educational system.

The committee decided that in order for the sampling to be truly representative, all 28 school districts should be included in the interviewing process. It was also recommended that the number of persons interviewed should reflect proportionately the current dropout rates for each district.

An unstructured, open-ended format was chosen for the interviews in order to allow for the flow of interviewees' feelings and comments. Every committee member was experienced at interviewing and felt confident with this approach.

Two committee members assumed the responsibility for designing this interviewing instrument. The first draft was compiled and submitted to members for review in January. The final draft was prepared after feedback from the committee. Copies of both are attached to this report.

After reexamining the time constraints and other obligations of members, the committee narrowed its focus from the original countywide survey to include only the following districts; Birmingham, Clarkston, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Novi, Pontiac, South Lyon, Troy. It was believed that this sampling was still diverse enough for the responses to be representative of the entire county.

Members selected the districts and populations they would interview. Arrangements for conducting the interviews were made through the superintendents or building principals. Terry Thomas facilitated this process by

preparing a letter of introduction for each interviewer and providing copies explaining the Task Force project for each administrator.

Interviews were conducted on both a group and individual basis, depending upon the specific arrangements made by the interviewer. Confidentiality was assured and feedback on the results was promised. Furthermore, as recognition for their cooperation in this project, each person interviewed was made a member of the countywide Task Force Committee. The Objective XVII Committee also plans to show its appreciation to interviewees through a recognition activity.

Upon completion of their interviews, each committee member was asked to tabulate and categorize their results. The general format followed for these summaries was that used by Terry Thomas in his book, "Interviews with Educational and Community Agency Personnel." Members were asked to separate responses of seniors and dropouts, and to categorize them whenever possible under the following subject areas:

School Administration
Teachers
Counselors
Vocational Schools
Attendance Policies
Curriculum
Parents
Students
Teen Parents
Judicial System
Health
Substance Abuse
Community Agencies
Adult Education
Oakland Schools

Additional categories were added when applicable.

The final task of the committee remains to compile a booklet summarizing the information submitted by the committee members.

Findings

For the most part, the responses were predictable. Dropouts identified a wide range of reasons for leaving school: dislike/disinterest in school, fighting, poor attendance, alcohol or drugs, problems at home, pregnancy, problems with kids in school, poor performance (being "held back"), offenses against the law. Although a few indicated that they first began thinking of dropping out when they were in elementary school (5th and 6th grades), the majority indicated their problems began in junior or senior high school. Most of the dropouts' families did not approve of their decision and encouraged them to remain in and return to school. With only a few exceptions, they would not make the same decision today. Those that have returned to school demonstrate a genuine pride in graduating - and would advise others to stay in school. Most of the dropouts indicated there was no school official to whom they could go for support or help with academic or individual problems. Teachers were identified most often and criticized for showing lack of interest both in students and in teaching. Administrators were viewed mainly as disciplinarians and either indifferent or inaccessible to students. With the

exception of vocational classes, dropouts felt the curriculum was boring and had too many requirements. Several noted that class sizes were too large which prohibited teachers from providing individual help they needed. Attendance policies were criticized for being too rigid and restrictive, again not allowing for individual differences. Detention and suspension appeared to be ineffective in changing behavior patterns. Many of the dropouts interviewed have returned to adult or alternative education programs and are experiencing success in those programs.

By sheer virtue of the fact that they have remained in school, seniors had not experienced the severity of difficulties identified by dropouts. Most commented that their peer relationships were a positive factor in their school experiences. A majority could also identify at least one school official - teacher, coach, counselor, band director - who had taken a personal interest in them. Suggestions for how schools could improve centered primarily on improving teachers'attitudes and performance, changing curriculum (types of classes, content, and requirements), and developing flexible, uniform attendance policies.

Recommendations

Although the information received from the interviews is significant, it is by no means exact. By design the instrument was informal and unstructured. Interviewers used a lot of flexibility in the types and number of questions asked. Although the effort was made to make the sampling representative, committee members found it difficult to identify and enlist the cooperation of "real" dropouts. Several had to opt to use adult/alternative education students for their dropout sample. Results may have been different if all had been out of school. Also time limitations, professional responsibilities, and deadlines prevented the committee from sampling every school district in the county.

For the results to be truly valid, a more objective instrument needs to be developed. The sampling should be increased and expanded to include all of Oakland County. Persons interviewed should be segmented more carefully by specific characteristics. The committee feels that we have only "touched the surface" of the dropout problem and that each issue raised during our interviews requires studies research and evaluation.

Resources: Cervantes, Lucius Ferdinand. The Dropouts: Causes and Cures. University of Michigan Press. 1965

QUESTIONNAIRE: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DROPOUTS USED AS A GUIDE

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the work of the Task Force on Dropouts in Oakland County. By participating in this interview you become a member of the Task Force. You will be invited to a debriefing on the information we obtain through this process. Therefore I do need your name, address, and phone number in order that you can be contacted about the debriefing. Your name, etc. will NOT be on my notes from the interview, nor will it be used in any way to identify you with your responses to my questions.

Please know that the information you share with me today will be kept confidential. While you may refer in your answers to specific individuals that information (names, places) will NOT be used in compiling the results of these interviews. For example: If you had a bad experience with a teacher, an administrators, a custodian - that information would be noted - but not the name of the person involved.

It is our hope that by conducting these interviews we can help others. We thank you in advance for your contributions. Let your feelings flow when I ask you these questions. If you have an answer for a question that is not asked - please share your thoughts with me.

(Note - here you may wish to ask: May I have your permission to record this interview so that I can really listen to you and then take notes from the tape. After I take my notes you have my word that I will erase the tape. No one will listen to the tape but me).

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DROPOUTS - A GUIDE

How old are you?

When did you drop out?

Did any one individual in your school cause you the problem that made you decide to leave?

Can you identify what you did/did not do to cause yourself this pain?

Did any one individual in your family/home cause any of the problems that made you decide to leave school?

Did money cause the problem?

Did a death or divorce cause the problem?

Were you bored?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DROPOUTS - A GUIDE (Continued)

Were drugs or alcohol involved?

Were you in any special programs for the gifted? for reading? for math?

Did you have good study habits?

If someone from school - a teacher, counselor, band director had asked you to come back - would you have gone back?

Did anyone reach out to you?

Do you know how to get back?

Do you know the alternatives - i.e. the G.E.D., Adult Night School, etc.?

Would you be comfortable going back?

Does transportation enter into your decision on school?

How does your family feel about your current dropout status?

What are you doing with your time?

Are you working?

Do you have a plan?

Do you know who could help you now?

Do you have any career goals?

What are they?

How do you plan to meet those goals?

Is there anything you want to tell me about dropping out?

Is there anyway that you know of that I could help you?

What would you tell a younger brother/sister/friend about dropping out?

About school in general?

Thank you very much for helping us with our task of learning about the causes of dropouts in Oakland County. You will be hearing from us about the Spring Debriefing. Agains - thanks and Good Luck!

You have listened to me and permitted me to ask you a lot of personal and perhaps painful questions. Thank you for letting me do that.

Now as we end this session I would like to turn the tables and permit you to ask me anything you want to know. What are your questions?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CURRENT SENIORS - A GUIDE

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. By participating in this interview you are becoming a member of the Oakland Schools Task Force on Dropouts. You will be invited to a debriefing in the Spring to discuss the results of these interviews. Therefore I need your

Name: Address: Phone:

May I have permission to tape record this interview so that I won't have to take notes and listen to you at the same time? The tape will be erased after I record the data. Thank you.

What school do you attend?

How many schools have you attended, including pre-school, elementary, middle/junior high, high school?

Why are you in school?

Did you ever think about dropping out?

Why didn't you drop out?

Did any teacher have a strong influence on your school life?

Counselor? Athletic director? Administrator?

Did you participate in sports?

Did the sports keep you in school?

Do you know any dropouts?

Do you know what that person dropped out?

Do you have career plans?

Are you working now?

Is school easy, moderately difficult, difficult for you?

What one thing would you change about your school if you had the power to change anything?

Again- why did you stay in school?

Do you have any final suggestions for helping the kids who might be thinking about dropping out in the future?

Thanks a lot for helping us with this project. Now is your turn to ask me a question. What is it?

WHAT DID THE DROPOUTS SAY?

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. The only contact I had with an administrator was when I was in trouble. No administrator ever tried to find out what the real problems were - they just seemed to want me to leave.

2. I had only negative experiences with administrators. They just wanted me out of their hair.

3. The lower school dean was glad to see me go. The upper house dean did seem a little more interested in my problems.

4. No administrator ever suggested that I stay around and try to work out my problems with school.

5. The administrators in my building didn't even know that I existed and I am sure that they never missed me. I was just a number.

6. Any problems that I had with administrators were problems that I caused. But they never seemed interested in helping me find solutions, either.

SCHOOL TEACHERS

1. My Band Teacher was the only one who ever tried to help me. He even called me at home to come in and talk. I finished school a year late, but I wouldn't have finished this soon without him.

2. No teacher ever expressed any interest in me.

3. Only the A students get any attention around my building.. or athletes.

4. Even in Special Ed I felt treated like a second class citizen.

5. My social studies teacher was great. He would even ask us about significant events in our lives outside the school.

6. High school teachers teach subjects, not kids.

7. No teacher ever seemed excited to see me.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

1. My counselor didn't even know my name, until I told it to him.

2. My counselor helped me get into a GED program in Adult Ed.

3. My counselor helped me find a part time job so that I could go to night school.

4. I think my counselor was relieved when I left.

5. My counselor was only interested in college bound kids and I wasn't even finishing my junior year.

AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

1. SEOVEC kept me in school through my junior year.

2. I wish someone had suggested a vocational school to me earlier.

3. I didn't know about them.

4. I didn't go because I thought it was for kids who were "different".

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICIES

1. My school is a lot stricter than it used to be. That's good.

2. I don't think that detentions and/or suspensions help me have a better attendance record.

3. My poor attendance started in junior high and it led to my dropping out. I got so far behind that I felt buried. I only got punished, never encouraged.

4. Sometimes I felt as if I was in a police state instead of a democracy.

5. I think detentions for attendance was stupid.

6. I wish high school attendance was more like college, sometimes I didn't need to go to class to pass but the rules got in my way.

7. I didn't mind going to interesting classes but some of my teachers put me to sleep. The thing that got me in trouble was skipping boring classes.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

1. I was bored and wish there had been classes in subject areas that interested me. I don't know why I have to learn about ancient civilizations when I need to know about the one we are living in right now.

2. There are too many requirements. Too many classes are for kids going to college. I didn't want to go to college, just to get a diploma and a job.

3. I don't understand why things are almost the same in what we study now as they were when my mom went to school.

4. Nobody ever asks us what we want in the course of study.

5. There weren't any classes that I was interested in.

PARENTS

1. I wish I hadn't dropped out because it upset my mom a lot.

2. My folks don't give a (explitive deleted) about what I do.

3. My parents are mad because I dropped out.

4. My parents never knew whether I went to school or not because they left for their jobs before the school bus came.

5. I want to finish school to make my parents happy.

6. My dad dropped out too. He didn't care.

STUDENTS

1. All of my friends dropped out too.

2. My friends who are still in school include me in their activities but it's not the same.

3. Some of my student friends encouraged me to go to night school, which I am doing.

4. Nobody cared what I did.

5. Students in junior high sold me pot and that is when I stopped caring about school.

6. The thing I miss most about school now that I'm out is not being around other kids.

TEENAGE PARENTS

1. No student interviewed fit this category.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM

1. One student interviewed had had contact with the system because of an arrest for possession of an illegal substance. He thought he had been treated fairly. It forced him to enter the armed service and get straightened out.

HEALTH

1. This topic was not ever mentioned.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. This appeared to be a main cause of several dropout's problems. Several students stated that they had gotten involved in junior high and more or less let it take over their lives.

2. No one interviewed would admit that it was something they could not handle.

3. No one interviewed was interested in professional help or referral.

COMMUNITY AGENCIES

1. One student interviewed had had contact with one of the Youth Assistance officials at an earlier age. He stated that it was just something he had to deal with because he got into trouble.

ADULT EDUCATION

1. Several students are working on G.E.D. programs through adult education programs both within and outside of their own communities.

2. Students do seem to be aware of the Adult Ed alternative.

OAKLAND SCHOOLS

1. No student interviewed had any contact with Oakland Schools.

WHAT DID THE GRADUATING SENIORS SAY?

Graduating Seniors' Comments

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

1. Minimal contact. I don't think anyone in the office knows my name.

2. Because I've been active on Student Council I do know the people in the office and they are always cool with me.

3. School administrators want things to run smoothly, I don't ruffle anyone's feathers so I don't have any contact with them.

4. I don't deal with them.

5. Our upper dean stays in his office and doesn't hassle anyone who isn't hassling him.

6. The lower school dean wanders around and catches people who are out of class, since I go to class I don't have any contact with him.

7. School administrators have had little or no effect on my life.

SCHOOL TEACHERS

1. My government teacher had a great impact on me. Finally school and the real world seemed to come together. I'm going to major in Political Science because of her.

2. My teachers have always been great. I'm in National Honor Society and have worked closely with our adviser. He is into computers and has taught me a lot about using the database, etc. It has been neat.

3. My teachers have made the difference. My science teacher in 11th grade made school interesting for me and now I'm going to major in Biology in college.

4. Teachers don't hassle me, I don't hassle them.

5. My band director got me a college scholarship. He made me realize I could do things I hadn't thought were possible.

AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

None of the students I interviewed had any personal experience with the area of vocational schools. They did know about them and even said they had been good for some kids they knew. They specifically mentioned the horticulture program at SEOVEC.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICIES

1. The rules are strict, but as a senior I've been able to bend them and survive.

2. I don't like the closed campus we have now.

3. I think that detentions and suspensions for attendance problems are stupid.

4. Attendance policies don't affect me because I have never missed.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

1. I wish that the curriculum would enter the 20th century.

2. I've been bored, but I've stayed because I need the credits for college.

3. I feel like I've wasted time in some of the classes I've had. I wish that the curriculum reflected the '80's. I'd like more opportunity to work in a school/business co-op. I'd also like to have more practical experience with computers.

4. I fail to understand why we have so many courses that are not relevant. I've taken all of the college bound requirements and can't say that they have been very exciting.

5. The English classes that I've taken have reflected the interests of the teachers and I am worried that I don't know what I need to know for college.

6. I think the curriculum "explitive deleted"! When was it revised?

7. The new classes in computers and with the international communications simulation have been very exciting.

PARENTS

1. My parents gave me no choice - I knew that I had to finish school and have a decent grade point or I wouldn't have survived in my house.

2. My mom and dad agree on one thing - that is that I am expected to do well and go to college.

3. My parents have always set high goals for all of us and we have reached them so far.

4. My dad never gave me any choice about school: Do good was the only rule.

5. School is very important to my parents, therefore, it is important to me.

STUDENTS

1. My friends are all college-bound students. That helps.

2. The kids have made school fun.

3. School would be a total bore without my fellow students.

4. My friends have helped me stick with the program. We compete but it is totally friendly.

5. I'm rooming with several guys in Ann Arbor that I've been in school with since grade school.

TEENAGE PARENTS

The students interviewed had no experience in this arena.

JUDICIAL SYSTEMS

The students interviewed had no experience in this arena.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. None of the students interviewed admitted to any participation.

2. Several students indicated that there is a high incidence of casual use of marijuana and alcohol (mostly beer).

COMMUNITY AGENCIES

The students interviewed had no experience with community agencies.

ADULT EDUCATION

Several students indicated that they were aware of the adult education programs and knew kids who used them, but they had had no contact themselves.

OAKLAND SCHOOLS

None of the students interviewed had had any personal contact with Oakland Schools. They all know about Oakland Schools now.